

Study: SLT economy on positive trajectory

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe isn't the same city it was just a few years. And that's a good thing.

Economic indicators point to a rebirth of sorts, but there is still plenty of room for improvement. That was the message delivered Oct. 18 by David and Jamie Orr to the City Council.

The Orrs, who own the Tahoe Mountain Lab, were part of the economic development task force the city convened in 2014. They were then hired to study the economic situation in the city.

"Leadership must be able to make bold investments in the future," Jamie Orr said.

Partnerships will be key – whether it's the city working closer with Lake Tahoe Community College or the private and public sectors collaborating more. It's about being better connected – as in reliable cell and Internet service. Millennials take it for granted that they can reach whoever they want 24/7 and not at dial-up speeds.

Enticing businesses to move here is getting easier. To keep this up there needs to be a consistent message.

"We need to market our strengths. We need to tell authentic stories," David Orr said.

South Lake Tahoe hasn't always had a great reputation. At the height of the recession the boarded up, rundown buildings were more prevalent than thriving businesses. That has turned around. And it's not just restaurants, questionable massage parlors and T-shirt shops opening.

Now more young professionals are calling the area home instead of just the transient liftie. They are helping define the types of businesses that are opening – like breweries, and Internet based firms.

While some people are doing well, Heidi Hill Drum with the Tahoe Prosperity Center, said per capita income in the city is just less than \$25,000/year.

Small businesses are usually the backbone of most towns and South Lake Tahoe is no different. The Orrs pointed to their own business as an example of the burgeoning entrepreneurial spirit. Within their walls on Harrison Avenue are a multitude of workers – some more traditional, some just getting started, but all sharing a work space.

“Their presentation (Tuesday) made it perfectly clear, the city’s investment of \$20,000 is an excellent return on the investment. The business incubator idea is blossoming at Tahoe Mountain Lab and looks to be an idea they have launched on their own; the relationships working with regional and national partners to bring attention to entrepreneurs to South Lake Tahoe is clearly been successful and resulted business start-ups coming to town – as well as helping South Lake Tahoe gain attention from other mountain communities promoting small entrepreneur businesses,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “They’ve expanded business into the field of workforce education, an area needing attention in South Lake Tahoe and they are reaching local youth to inspire and encourage interest in creative entrepreneurship business. They’ve done a great job at developing regional partnerships.”

The cost of this study was much less than other expenditures the city has made in the name of economic development. More than a decade ago the city had two staff members whose job was to grow the economy. Basically they studied other people’s numbers and did nothing to spur growth, all at cost of about \$250,000/year.

The Orrs noticed that access to capital is a real issue, especially for small entrepreneurs. A micro loan program might be the solution.

The couple looked at what is going on throughout the basin, as well as Truckee and Reno. Truckee is ahead of the South Shore when it comes to the arts, especially by creating shared spaces. Reno is bursting with businesses, which is apt to have a ripple effect in the basin as that area grows.

The council is expected delve further into the Orrs' recommendations at the February strategic focus workshop.

"We will work with the 2016-18 City Council to shape the next two years of the city's work plan, develop a clear set of priorities, goals and expectations and performance measures to ensure we stay focused on all that we can do to improve the business climate on the South Shore," Kerry said.

And if ultimately the goal is to attract more people to the area, housing is going to become an even greater problem. Today it's hard for the average worker to find a decent place to live. But the fact that 70 percent of the housing stock is not occupied by full-time residents is a 20-plus-year-old issue with no solution, especially when there is a limit to new construction.

Study: Earth soaking up less carbon

By Chelsea Harvey, Washington Post

It might sound strange, but scientists believe the ground we

walk on can be a huge weapon in the fight against climate change. That's because the earth's soil is serves as a giant carbon reservoir, containing trillions of tons that would otherwise end up in the atmosphere.

Currently, soil is believed to be a carbon sink, meaning it's still taking up more carbon than it's releasing into the air, and models have suggested that it will keep sucking up carbon through at least the end of the century. But according to research, scientists may have been seriously overestimating the extent to which this is going to happen – and that could be a big setback in our global climate efforts.

The study, published this month in the journal Science, used carbon dating to help figure out how quickly carbon can be stored in the ground and how long it stays there – information that informs scientists' estimates of how much carbon will be sequestered by the earth's soils through the next 100 years.

Read the whole story

Goodwill not done expanding into region

By Cathie Anderson, Sacramento Bee

In three months' time, Goodwill Industries has opened three stores, in Placerville, South Lake Tahoe and on Sacramento's Alta Arden Expressway, but regional CEO Joseph Mendez told me that the store debuts aren't over yet.

Goodwill soon will open its first store in Elk Grove and a second in Sparks.

In Placerville, for instance, Goodwill has worked for years with the El Dorado Food Bank to offer services, but it wanted a physical presence in the county where it could provide on-the-job training. It opened Thursday at 3868 Forni Road.

Read the whole story

Storms raise Lake Tahoe by 3 inches

In what seemed like three days of uninterrupted rain in the basin amounted to 11 billion gallons of water dropping into Lake Tahoe.

All that moisture meant Lake Tahoe's level increased by 3 inches, according to the National Weather Service in Reno. The lake is still 2 inches below its natural rim. This means in Tahoe City at the dam no water is flowing into the Truckee River.

Some canals in the Tahoe Keys in South Lake Tahoe that were almost dry now have measurable water.

The Friday-Sunday storm system was part of the remnants of Typhoon Songda.

The next chance of moisture is set for Oct. 24, with the Weather Service saying there is a "slight chance." Until then, highs will be in the upper 60s, with overnight lows in the 30s.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Pilot's body found near plane wreckage



Search and rescue teams board an Air Force Blackhawk helicopter on Oct. 18 at Lake Tahoe Airport. Photo/LTN

The pilot of a missing plane was found deceased outside the wreckage of the aircraft this afternoon.

A large contingent of search and rescue personnel from El Dorado and Douglas counties left Lake Tahoe Airport on Tuesday afternoon via transport from military helicopters.

The 1960 Cessna 182 was located at 4:25pm Oct. 18 southwest of Lake Schmidell in what officials called a “rugged area.”

Tyrell Kremer, 52, was flying alone. The Wilton man was returning Saturday to the Jackson Airport in Amador County from a trip to Idaho. High winds along with snow and rain were coming down when the plane lost contact.

Business couple chastise SLT councilwoman

By Kathryn Reed

It was a war of words at today's South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting, with David and Jamie Orr voicing their anger about their perceived treatment by Councilwoman JoAnn Conner.

The Orrs, who own Tahoe Mountain Lab, had a contract with the city to do an economic report. They had been reluctant to make the presentation while Conner still sat on the council because they felt threatened by her.

The alleged threats began in January on the public Facebook page called South Lake Tahoe & Around the Lake. The couple passed out a copy of the exchange to the council members at the meeting.

David Orr, in reading from prepared comments on Oct. 18, was clearly not comfortable doing so. The comments came after the couple had delivered the economic development report.



South Lake Tahoe Councilwoman JoAnn Conner, right, listens as David and Jamie Orr complain about her behavior. Photo/LTN

"The reason I'm bringing this up is because in our opinion it would seem that Councilmember Conner sought to use our contract with the city, and the 'favours' she had done for us as a way to keep us from publicly denouncing her actions," Orr told the council. "Councilmember Conner's comments made us feel small. It made us feel intimidated and threatened."

Conner throughout Orr's short statement kept interrupting him, saying it was "illegal" and "against the law" to repeat the words she had typed onto what she called a "closed forum."

The page is public. And, really, nothing on social media is private. Plus, Conner's statements were clearly coming from her capacity as an elected official and not a private citizen, thus making them unquestionably public.

Conner, in her outbursts, said, "This is not public comment time" and that this was a "shameless political speech."

Conner is up for re-election, neither of the Orrs has run for local political office.

On the Facebook exchange the context of the conversation was Tahoe Prosperity Center had just released the Indicators

Report. What the Orrs took issue with in particular was this item from Conner, which he read into the record:

"David and Jamie Orr, what exactly is your issue with me? I supported your business and referred people to you when you first came to town. I suggested you be considered for and supported you for those thousands of dollars you received from the City of South Lake Tahoe to help business owners. You obviously have a great loyalty to our employee, the city manager. For some reason, and it is disappointing to see you resort to hateful attacks with no substance. You often criticize the very city that gave you a lot of money – you want them to do more for small business and the citizens. Perhaps you could tell the people here what you have accomplished for business and the citizens. Perhaps you could tell the people here what you have accomplished for businesses; where their money has been put to use. It seems to me you could help with some of the things you keep saying the city should do. I hear you criticize a lot, but I don't hear solutions offered. What are your ideas and how would you make them happen?"

Orr told the council, "This interaction made it incredibly difficult for us to want to come to you today."

He added, "For the record, we worked very well with the city. We have been working incredibly hard at fostering and bringing change to this community to spur economic development."

After the awkward exchange the mayor called for a brief recess. The Orrs left and the council went about its business without a word about what had just transpired.

Woman dies in Douglas County Hwy. 50 crash



One person died Oct. 16 in Douglas County on Highway 50.
Photo/Provided

A woman visiting Lake Tahoe from Taiwan died Sunday in a car accident in Douglas County.

Pao-Yi Tseng was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital where she was pronounced deceased.

The woman's 72-year-old husband, Jiann-Juh Tseng, was driving west on Highway 50 in the slow lane when the vehicle drifted off the road and then struck a tree near mile marker 6. This was Oct. 16 at 3:10pm.

Also in the vehicle was the couple's daughter. She was taken to Barton Memorial Hospital where she was treated for non-life threatening injuries.

Impairment is not suspected. Tseng was wearing his seat belt; it is not known if the passengers were, according to the Nevada Highway Patrol.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Nev. gun laws inching closer to Calif.'s

By David Montero, Los Angeles Times

Joe Leal says he knows the good ones from the bad. He's been doing this for decades. He trusts that his brown eyes – narrowed beneath a furrowed brow – won't deceive him.

He looks down at the shiny silver handgun under a glass case. Next to it is an all-black one. Criminals don't want guns like this, he explains. They're expensive and only the serious enthusiast will lay down more than \$2,000 for such a weapon. Even his lower-end guns fetch at least \$600.

He'll check their identification to make sure they're a Nevada resident. If he gets a bad vibe, he'll walk the customer over to a table where a federally licensed gun dealer can run a background check. That's if he even decides to go that far. When he's suspicious, the 82-year-old former U.S. Army lieutenant and long-time Nevada resident simply refuses to sell.

Leal is a private seller who might move 15 firearms a year. He calls it his "hobby jobby" and doesn't believe he needs the government telling him when to run a background check – as is now being proposed on the November ballot. It's not the Nevada way, he explains.

Read the whole story

Search continues for missing aircraft

The search for a missing plane is expected to resume this morning.

El Dorado County search and rescue teams started looking for the Cessna on Monday, but to no avail. Weather prevented a helicopter from assisting.

The pilot of a Cessna flying from Idaho to Sacramento has not been heard from since Saturday.

The last contact with the aircraft was when it was over the mountains southwest of South Lake Tahoe.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Sports center will redefine medical care in Tahoe



The multi-million dollar health facility in South Lake Tahoe will treat everyday and elite athletes. Photo/Provided

By Susan Wood

The Robert Maloff Center of Excellence is as much about Tahoe's past as it is building a solid future for sports medicine on the South Shore.

"Since 2003, we started talking about this. It's wellness, fitness and sports performance all in one – something we always needed to do, we just needed to know how to do it," physical therapist and project coordinator Chris Proctor told *Lake Tahoe News*. He is also the administrative director of Barton Health's Tahoe Center for Orthopedics.

Proctor has built a reputation by concocting creative means to work different areas of the body that athletes either need to strengthen or fix. They're referred to as the "MacGyver-type"

mechanisms thrown together for optimum performance. (This reporter witnessed a creative harness device in which the athlete had to pull Proctor, who stands well over 6 feet.)

Given its one-of-a-kind nature, the center will have leading edge equipment. Touch-screen activation will dominate the sometimes makeshift-style methods of working the muscular-skeletal system.

The Robert Maloff Center of Excellence will have space for elite athletes and include partnerships with the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association. It will be the first to place orthopaedics, rehabilitation and sport performance training services under one roof.

Complementary medicine such as acupuncture, nutrition, meditation and yoga will also have roles in the treatment of the mind and body.

Barton Health is busy constructing the unique, 26,000-square-foot facility that is designed to prevent and treat sports-related injuries in this athletic community. It broke ground Aug. 23 on the east side of Barton Memorial Hospital; the foundation is laid and the footings are going in. It should be done in a year.

Lisa Maloff donated \$10 million to the building of the facility in her husband's name, a rewarding gesture she admitted.

"We all went to Barton," the longtime resident told *Lake Tahoe News*.

She and her late husband, Robert, came to South Lake Tahoe in 1958 "when we didn't have a hospital," she said, chuckling.

"He always wanted to give to the hospital, so I did it in his honor," Maloff said.



Lisa Maloff with Barton Health CEO Clint Purvance at the center's groundbreaking in August. Photo/Barton Health

The future

In the grand scheme of things, this 12-month period is a short span in comparison to when the visionaries connected to the health care system dreamed up the \$30 million-plus, two-story facility.

The center is designed to focus on wellness and be proactive with an amateur or professional athlete's health. Memberships to the Center of Excellence will be available.

The second floor will be dedicated to classroom settings for sports performance education.

The health care system will evaluate in the coming months who of the 900 employees and 150 on the medical staff will work there.

Tahoe and orthopaedics

It is a well-known fact that if you have a skiing, biking or

running injury – especially those involving delicate knees – you want to be in South Lake Tahoe. Some of the finest orthopaedists alive have graced these mountains.

Terry Orr, for one, has spent years as one of the U.S. Ski Team physicians.

“Part of it is what I envisioned – and it’s a whole lot better than that now,” Orr said of the center. As a renowned orthopaedist, Orr plans to move his practice into the center when it’s ready.

“When someone comes in, we’ll look at the whole body. We’ll see people from start to finish,” he said. The first order of business will be to look at the athletes’ goals and tailor a program to get them to where they want to be physically.

Why is this important?

“People who move up here, live here and visit here – a good proportion of them are here because they want to be active, and they want to stay active. We have world champion skiers at 80 years old,” he said.

On the flip side, there’s a whole other market, too.

“We’ve got a whole group of youth coming up who aspire to be in this active life. These kids are doing big tricks,” he said.

The idea is to strengthen their vital joints ahead of time – and not just during rehabilitation after the fact.

“If they’re stronger, they’re going to be safer,” he said.

At least one prominent South Shore Olympic athlete could relate to that theory.

Olympic gold medalist Jamie Anderson is revered for her death-defying feats of big air snowboarding. She supports a place in

Tahoe that strengthens the body more than ever before.

And it's personal as an athlete prone to injury. She broke her collarbone last December.

"I think it's an awesome idea for Lake Tahoe. It's going to bring a lot of good to the community – something we've needed for a long time," Anderson told *Lake Tahoe News*.



The Robert Maloff Center of Excellence will open in 2017.
Rendering/Provided

Tahoe's medical history

As Barton heads to the future of treating athletes and enthusiasts, it embraces the foundation of its recreation-oriented past.

First of all, it had the early innovative thinking of knee specialist Richard Steadman, who worked alongside the late Paul Fry in their orthopaedist practice in South Lake Tahoe. (Fry donated funds for the Barton Maloff Center.)

Steadman, thought of as a champion for coordinated care, wanted to build a similar center in Tahoe in the 1980s. He was turned down at the time, but that didn't stop his quest.

He donated his services at what became the first U.S. Olympic training center in Squaw Valley. He also started the nonprofit Steadman Sports Medicine Research Foundation here in 1988.

Steadman became a preeminent source for focusing on disorders of the knee, developing a treatment for injuries to the anterior cruciate ligament. It became known as the “healing response.”

The revolutionary ways to get athletes to heal have come a long way from when Steadman would put a hard cast on and have the patient stay still.

Movement is now key.

Steadman moved his expertise in 1980 to Vail to open a clinic bearing his name. There he expanded his level of research and sports clients. Some are famous – as in U.S. downhill skier Lindsey Vonn.

He wishes those involved with Barton’s Center of Excellence well and has no doubt the facility will thrive as his has over the years.

South Lake Tahoe’s has an even larger wellness component.

“They should have good success with the operation. I think the people who are continuing there are excellent people with the best of intentions,” Steadman told *Lake Tahoe News*, mentioning Orr by name.

Steadman insisted there are no hard feelings about wishing Barton would have supported this type of facility in the past. Things tend to work out the way they’re supposed to, he said.

“I’m not critical. I think the (Barton) people at that point were not thinking about this,” he said.

At age 79, Steadman has recently retired from his clinic, but not from being active. He hikes every day in most seasons and straps on the snowshoes in the winter.

“It used to be that as we advanced in age, people felt we were supposed to just sit down. From my era, we figured out that

was not the right thing to do," he said.

Steadman, who was also pleasantly surprised by his facility exceeding his expectations, fashioned his clinic's rehabilitation after working to help the athlete "not just get back, but to get back to a higher level," he added.

The same outcome is what stakeholders of the Barton center hope to achieve.